

## **The NS Regime Seizes Power**

### **Aufgaben**

- 1 Delineate how Dominian assesses the political situation in Germany in early 1933. (Material)  
**(30 BE)**
  
- 2 Explain the National Socialists' measures to set up a dictatorship in 1933/34, taking Dominian's observations into account.  
**(35 BE)**
  
- 3 Discuss to what extent historical experiences from the German Empire contributed to the view that the German people "may be considered as unlikely to oppose another militarist government" (Material).  
**(35 BE)**

**Material****Leon Dominian: Report to the Secretary of State (1933)**

*On 21 February, 1933, the American Consul General at Stuttgart, Leon Dominian, sent a report to the U.S. Secretary of State, Henry L. Stimson, on political developments in Germany.*

I have the honor to submit below, as of possible interest, the striking similarity observable between internal political developments in Germany since National Socialist success culminated in the appointment of Adolf Hitler as Chancellor of the Reich and the events which unfolded themselves in Italy in the Fall of 1921 and led to the establishment of Fascism in that country<sup>1</sup>. My former  
5 assignment to Rome enables me now to make interesting comparisons.

Perhaps the most striking development since the accession of Mr. Hitler to the premiership has been the great increase of political brawls<sup>2</sup> and fights reported throughout the country. Street fighting in large cities and small villages between National Socialists on the one hand and, generally, Communist or Socialist bodies or individuals on the other has become a daily occurrence since February 1 and is  
10 steadily augmenting in intensity and extent. [...]

The extent to which these encounters are definite provocations cannot be determined with any degree of accuracy. It is believed, however, that the aggressiveness and militancy which are primary tenets<sup>3</sup> and methods of operation of Fascist organizations would not preclude intentional preparation, through these brawls, of the necessary circumstances which would enable the government to invoke a state of  
15 exceptionally grave conditions and adopt measures tending to suppress many forms of liberty granted by the German Constitution. Such a move, it is believed, is favored in National Socialist circles in order to ensure success of this party at the elections on March 5. As a matter of fact, matters are fast reaching the stage at which doubt is felt at the holding of a free election in Germany on that day. [...]

But even were the election results not any more decisive than those of 1932, it is possible that the  
20 National Socialists will force their stay in power through the well equipped party army they have built up. There has been no lack of public assertion in the past weeks by leaders of the National Socialist party that they intend to maintain themselves in power irrespective of election results. This is in keeping with Fascist methods and with Italian precedents.

Assumption of authority by the National Socialists is viewed with particular alarm in academic circles  
25 where faculties and the teaching staff are government appointees. [...]

In Germany these days, as in Italy under the Fascist régime, the National Socialists claim that their party alone can meet the communist danger. The argument is exaggerated and may be discounted as the highly efficient German police together with the Reichswehr, not to mention the thousands of orderly German citizens in every city suffice amply to prevent the setting up of a communist regime in  
30 Germany. The exploitation of communism by reactionary bodies in many countries is now too well known to need elaboration here. That communism will continue to exist in the country is probable because of existing industrial conditions. [...]

That the German people will act as the Italians and submit to Fascist rule is believed possible. The basis of this possibility is found in the toleration by the German people of the military clique headed  
35 by the former Kaiser which ruled them up to the end of 1918. A people which submitted to such a rule

<sup>1</sup> In March 1919, Mussolini formed the Fascist Party with the support of many unemployed war veterans. In 1921, the Fascist Party was invited to join the coalition government. By October 1922, Italy seemed to be slipping into political chaos and Mussolini presented himself as the only man capable of restoring order. King Victor Emmanuel III then invited Mussolini to form a government. Mussolini gradually dismantled the institutions of democratic government and in 1925 made himself dictator, taking the title 'Il Duce'.

<sup>2</sup> brawls – Streitigkeiten

<sup>3</sup> tenet – Prinzip

in the twentieth century may be considered as unlikely to oppose another militarist government such as the National Socialists are organizing.

The Consul General at Stuttgart (Dominian) to the Secretary of State, No. 899, in: Foreign Relations of the United States Diplomatic Papers, 1933. The British Commonwealth, Europe, Near East and Africa, Volume II, URL: <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1933v02/d146> (abgerufen am 27.12.2020).